

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 PA-01
USIE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00
NEAE-00 /044 W

-----035380 091650Z /43

O 091607Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7024
DEA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1254

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MORG, LE, PINT
SUBJ: SIXTY LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS TRANSFERRED

1. ON MARCH 8 THE LEBANESE ARMY HQ PUBLISHED THE TRANSFER ORDERS FOR 60 OFFICERS WHICH WILL TAKE EFFECT WITHIN ONE WEEK. THE MAIN CHANGES INVOLVE REPLACING CONTROVERSIAL EXTREMIST CHRISTIAN OFFICERS IN THE FAYYADIYAH, SARBA AND RUMYAH BARRACKS, APPOINTING OR CONFIRMING COMMANDERS OF THE FIVE MILITARY REGIONS AND PLACING AT THE "DISPOSITION OF THE MOD" VARIOUS SENIOR AS WELL AS JUNIOR OFFICERS. A SECOND LIST ANNOUNCING MORE TRANSFERS IS EXPECTED TO BE PUBLISHED WITHIN 15 DAYS. THE FOLLOWING LISTS THE SIGNIFICANT TRANSFERS (CHRISTIAN INDICATED WITH A "C", MUSLIM WITH "M");

A. CHANGES:

1) CMDR OF SARBA BARRACKS, COL ANTOINE LAHAD (C)
REPLACED BY HIS ASSISTANT COL ROGER REGHALI (C). LAHAD WAS PLACED AT DISPOSITION OF MOD AND FEGHALI WAS REPLACED AS RECON BN CMDR BY DAPT LOUIS KASSIS (C).

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2) CMDR OF FAYYADIYAH BARRACKS, COL ANTOINE BARAKAT (C), REPLACED BY COL MICHEL SALEM (C). BARAKAT WAS PLACED AT DISPOSITION OF MOD. BARAKAT'S OTHER POSITION AS CMDR OF MOUNT LEBANON REGION WAS TRANSFERRED TO COL EMIL KALLAS (C).

3) CMDR OF NORTHERN REGION (PREVIOUSLY VACANT) WAS NAMED AS COL AMINE NASSER EDDINE (DRUZE).

4) CMDR OF UNIT 31, (TASK ORG BN LOCATED AT RUMYAH) LT COL IBRA-

HIM TANNOUS (C), REPLACED BY CAPTAIN KHAZEN WOUHAIBEH AL-KAZEN (C).

5) CMDR OF MP BN, MAJOR NAIF KALLAS (C), (LOC AT FAYYADIYAH)
REPLACED BY LT COL JAMIL NASSIF (C).

6) CMDR OF SOUTHERN REGION NAMED AS COL MOHAMMED ZEIN (M).
FORMER ACTING CMDR LT COL HANNI ABBAS (M) WILL NOW BE ASSISTANT.

7) CAPT ADNAN KHATIB (M) TRANSFERRED TO PRESIDENTIAL GUARD AT
BAABDA PALACE.

8) CAPT ASSAAD ABOU-JAOUDE (C) TRANSFERRED FROM UNIT 31 TO HEAD
AS YET NON-EXISTENT SCHOOL OF ELECTRONICS.

9) UNIT 31 ARTY CMDR, CAPT TAREK NOUJAIM (C), REPLACED BY CAPT
FARES SOUFLA (C). NOUJAIM WAS PUT AT DISPOSITION OF MOD.

10) LT COL'S ADNAN BECHARA (C) AND FAYEZ HARB (M) WERE NAMED TO
COMMAND THE NEW BRIGADE TO BE FORMED IN THE YARZE AREA. THIS
BRIGADE WAS NAMED FOR THE FIRST TIME AND IS CALLED THE DEFENSE
BRIGADE. IT WILL BE FORMED FROM THE STRIKEFORCE COMMANDOS PRE-
VIOUSLY UNDER G-2 AND RECRUITS.

B. CONFIRMATIONS

1) CMDR OF BEKAA CONFIRMED AS LT COL MICHEL KHOURY (BROTHER OF CG).

2) CMDR OF BEIRUT MILITARY DISTRICT CONFIRMED AS COL MUHKTAR
MAZBOUTI (M).

C. PLACED AT DISPOSITION OF MOD.

COL MUNIR SARDAK (M), UNASSIGNED OFFICER WAITING FOR ATTACHE
ASSIGNMENT. INFLUENTIAL BEIRUT SUNNITE.

COL FAHMI HAMDAN (M), UNASSIGNED OFFICER MARRIED TO SISTER OF
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IBRAHIM QULAYLAT.

LT YOUSSEF TAHAN (C), ZAHLE-BASED EXTREMIST.

2. TRANSFERS APPEAR TO PRIMARILY IMPACT ON CHRISTIAN EXTREMIST
ELEMENTS IN ARMY. ON FEB 17 KHOURY TOLD DATT TO EXPECT
CHANGES AS A RESULT OF FAYYADIYAH (SEE IR 6 857 0044 78).
ALTHOUGH THE TRANSFERS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN CALMLY BY THE
LOCAL POLITICAL PARTIES, INITIAL ARMY REPORTS FILTERING IN
APPEAR MIXED AND GENERALLY REFLECT A WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE. THIS
MORNING THE ARMA RECEIVED THE PARTY LINE FROM THE G-2, JOHNN
ABDO, THAT THE CHANGES WERE GENERALLY TOWARDS MORE MODERATE
CHRISTIAN OFFICERS AND THIS WAS GOOD STEP FORWARD FOR ARMY. WHEN
THE ARMA ANSWERED THAT, IN HIS OPINION, FEGHALI AND KAYEN WERE
NOT MODERATES, ABDO ANSWERED THAT THEY WERE WHEN COMPARED TO
LAHAD AND TANNOUS. OTHER MODERATE CHRISTIAN OFFICERS CLAIMED
THAT TRANSFERS WERE ONLY HALF MEASURES AND THAT A CLEAN SWEEP
WAS NEEDED. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY ARE CONCERNED THAT THERE WERE NO
CHANGES IN THE CHRISTIAN-DOMINATED STAFF, WHICH SOME OFFICERS
STILL CONSIDERED TO HAVE QUESTIONABLE LOYALTY AND HONESTY,
SPECIFICALLY WITH OFFICERS SUCH AS COL ALBERT MUNAYER, COL FARIS
LAHOUD AND LT COL FARIS MAHDI. ALSO, MORE MILITANT CHRISTIAN
OFFICERS WANTED TO KNOW WHEN THE PURGE OF CONTROVERSIAL MOSLEM

OFFICERS WOULD TAKEPLACE.

3. DEPUTY RENE MUAWWAD, A MODERATE MARONITE, DESCRIBED CHANGES
TO AUSTRALIAN CHARGE AS A SMALL STEP STRENGTHENING LESS
EXTREMIST ELEMENTS IN ARMY. AN AIDE TO DANY CHAMOUN TELLS US
THIS IS A FIRST MAJOR STEP IN GENERAL KHOURY'S NEW PROGRAM TO
SHAPE UP THE ARMY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT01254
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780106-0581
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT JOINT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780390/aaaacxqg.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3ddf0fcb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3395758
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIXTY LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS TRANSFERRED
TAGS: MORG, PINT, LE
To: STATE DEA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3ddf0fcb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014